Freight train service between India and Bangladesh

280. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to start freight train service between India and Bangladesh soon;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the service would reach up to the North-East, say upto Tripura;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) There are already four Railway links operational between India and Bangladesh as under:—

(i) Gede (India) Darsana (Bangladesh) Broad Gauge

(ii) Singhabad (India) - Rohanpur (Bangladesh) - Broad Gauge.

(iii) Radhikapur (India) - Birol (Bangladesh) - Meter Gauge.

(iv) Mahisasan (India) - Shahbazpur (Bangladesh) - Meter Gauge.

A fifth Railway link namely Petrapole (India) - Benapole (Bangladesh) - Broad Gauge, is likely to opened.

(c) No.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Setting up of Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation

281. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways have recently set up the Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation;

(b) whether the Corporation has commenced functioning; if so, where it has been located; and

(c) what are the details and the objectives of the Corporation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Corporation has obtained the certificate for commencement of business and will start operations in the year 2000. The nucleus office of the Corporation is presently located in Rail Bhavan, New Delhi.

(c) The objective of the Corporation is to professionalise and upgrade the management of catering and hospitality services on Indian Railways, development of rail-based tourism and marketing of passenger related value added services under a corporate entity. The Corporation has been incorporated with an authorised capital of Rs. 50 crore under the Companies Act, 1956.

Starting trains from Dehradun and Varanasi

†282. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1097, given in Rajya Sabha on 10th December, 1999 and state:

(a) whether Government propose to meet the demand of Rishikesh by starting Varanasi-Janata Express from Dehradun and Delhi-Saharanpur passenger train from Rishikesh; and

(b) whether the scheme to enhance operational facilities at Rishikesh would be sanctioned in this financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) 4265/4266 Express is already running between Varanasi and Dehradun and 371/372 Passenger is available between Rishikesh and Delhi *via* Saharanpur.

(b) There is no such proposal at present.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.